

ous frontier. The change marked the hopeless decline of the Chou, and while the dynasty endured for over five centuries longer, the feudal states and not the royal line now become the center of interest. The activities of the feeble *rois faineants* were more and more restricted to their religious and ceremonial as contrasted with their political functions. The dynasty prior to the removal of the capital is known as the Western Chou and after that event as the Eastern Chou.

From the eighth century B.C. until the middle of the third China roughly resembled the Europe of the Middle Ages. Like Medieval Europe, China was a collection of states with unstable boundaries. A kind of feudalism existed, the local princes in theory owing homage, tribute, counsel, and military service to the Chou monarchs, and minor lords having similar obligations to more powerful ones. The details of organization, however, were quite different from those of Europe. As the power of the Chou declined, some semblance of security was sought, as in Europe, in alliances and leagues, and several individual states successively won a kind of hegemony. Purely Chinese states were supposed not to make war on each other—& principle often honored more in the breach than in the observance—that devastating activity being theoretically employed only against the barbarians, the peoples of non-Chinese culture. When war was waged between any of the feudal states it was often more to exhibit the prowess of individual combatants and their skill in the established rules than to annihilate the adversary.

As in the Europe of the Middle Ages, the boundaries of civilization were steadily extended to embrace new peoples. In Europe the spread was northward—into Germany, Great

Britain, Scandinavia, Russia—while in China it was eastward (through Shantung), westward (into Szechwan), and especially southward (into the Yangtze Valley). As in Europe, too, a community of culture existed, but in China, although marked variations were found, especially in the frontier states which were beginning to enter the pale of Chinese culture, there seems to have been a closer approach to uniformity. The development of vernacular differences, particularly in literature, did not proceed as far as in Europe, and no religious chasm appeared such as that between the Western and Eastern churches. As in Medieval feudal Europe, so